Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi vs. Ali Sina Part 7

Javed Ahmad Ghamidi vs. Ali Sina

From: **khalid zaheer**

To: **faithfreedom2 at gmail.com**

Date: **Oct 5, 2006 9:52 PM**

Subject: **Our Response**

Dear Mr Ali Sina

This message is in response to your message to me dated September 30, 2006. I am responding to it after Mr Ghamidi went through the contents of it and apprised me of his views.

Before we comment on the essentially two points that were the subject of our first discussion, I would want to mention the followed two things as a prelude:

i) As I mentioned in one of my earlier messages, since we are doing quite a few other things apart from participating in this discussion, the responses from our side can take longer than what many people would expect. But please bear with us; it is in the interest of the quality and usefulness of this discussion that we take our time and not hurry through with our responses.

ii) Ours is a serious academic debate and not an attempt at providing emotionally consoling material to our respective fan clubs. In fact, if I am not mistaken, what brings us together despite the vast differences in our ideologies is the concern that some people, both religious and non-religious, don't allow their followers to face realities the way they are. We are confident that we, the participants on both sides of this discussion, are equally concerned that the truth should be allowed to lay bare before our readers and that no method be adopted that would take their minds away from what is being discussed. It is this concern that compels us to request you that no third point be raised before the first two are taken to as far as they can go in deciding the truth about them. Raising new points when the earlier ones haven't as yet been resolved helps only in distracting the reader from concentrating on the real issues of the discussion. We want to move step-by-step no matter how long it takes for the

journey to end. We have come together to uncover the truth. Let us do it in the best possible way.

Now let me comment on the first two points you have mentioned.

i) Your criticism on the Qur'anic presentation of intercession is that it is inconsistent and self contradictory. You have not been convinced by our response that the intercession to be allowed by the Almighty would be applicable to the case of marginal performers only. We will present our understanding from another perspective now and then take up your reservations one-by-one to show that your criticism doesn't logically apply to the Qur'anic concept of intercession.

Let us take the following Qur'anic passage: "The (acceptance of) repentance is binding on Allah in the case of such people only who do sin in an emotional state and then repent immediately afterwards. Such are the people whose repentance Allah shall most certainly accept. And Allah is most knowledgeable and wise. And repentance of such people is not going to be accepted who continue to sin until death reaches any one of them and he says "I repent now", nor indeed (is repentance) of those (going to be accepted) who die as disbelievers. For such people we have prepared a painful punishment." (4:17-18)

The above passage outlines three categories of people on the basis of their responses to the sins they commit. There are those who sincerely repent immediately after they commit a wrong act. There are others who don't repent until death reaches them. The case of both categories has been clarified in the above passage. However, the case of another category of people has not been mentioned in this verse: those who commit evil but don't repent immediately nor do they delay their repentance till viewing the signs of death. Their case has not been clarified in this passage of the Qur'an. The Almighty has neither declared that they will be forgiven nor has He announced that they are going to be punished. What if a person belonging to such a category was to seek justice from God Almighty on the Day of Judgment? And what if another person, let's say my ordinary self, was to ask the Almighty to forgive him? What objections can be raised against the possibility that such an event will take place before the Almighty makes a clear pronouncement to that effect? Intercession will be nothing more than a request tendered by some individuals to the Almighty to forgive those people whose case will be unclear on the basis of the principles of justice clearly outlined by the Almighty. Such an act will neither be an attempt to add anything to the His knowledge nor will it be instrumental in altering His decision. It will be a mere plea expressed by some individuals to seek mercy for some others who will be falling on the margin of good and bad performers.

On the basis of the above explanation, I am now mentioning our brief comments on some of the observations you have made. (Your observations in quotation marks are followed by our comments.)

a) “You are having second thoughts (about the concept of intercession).” We have consistently mentioned the same understanding of intercession. That understanding is based on one logical, coherent idea that runs through all the statements of the Qur’an relevant to that question.

b) “Doesn’t God know everything?” Given the clarification mentioned above, this question doesn’t even arise. The fact that a person will plead mercy from God for someone else in no way undermines belief in God’s omniscience.

c) “Can possibly anyone be more merciful to other humans than God?” This comment too is not applicable to the explanation we have offered above. In fact, it would be the supreme kindness of God that would allow some people to plead mercy for those people whom He will have already decided, but not openly announced, to forgive. It would be a gesture of graciousness on His part to allow some other people too to participate in that process. In other words, God Almighty could have shown kindness to people on the margin of success-failure boundary directly, but He will let others too to become a part of that process. By embracing others in His process of mercy, God will elevate those others to a very high status of recognition in the eyes of the rest of mankind.

d) “The philosophy of intercession denies not only the omniscience of God but also his mercy and fairness.” For omniscience and mercy, kindly refer to our earlier remarks. As for the possibility of a compromise in the principle of fairness, it needs to be pointed out that forgiveness for people who would fall on the margin of good and bad performers would be nothing but a delicate balance between the principle of mercy and fairness coming together to simultaneously play a role.

e) “Do Muhammad and other devout Muslims know the secrets of people's heart better than God?” I hope it is clear by now that this question also doesn’t apply to the Qur’anic concept of intercession.

f) “Funny thing is that Allah already knows that his decision is not right and the person deserves better treatment. So he asks his prophet and some good Muslims to beg for him to change his decision and make it right. If it was the best decision, how could anyone dare to ask him to change it?” Again, our hope is that, given our clarifications, the concept would start making sense to all sensible people and would not remain funny any more. Allah Almighty will not change His decision. He will only allow His decision to become manifest in a different way to indicate that while those who are

being forgiven didn't strictly fall in the category of clear winners, they are still getting the benefit of His mercy.

ii) You have moved on by making a passing remark that the mere fact that examples of third person pronouns used by authors for themselves do exist in literature of high quality is not an evidence of the fact that such shifts in the Qur'an also enable its text to belong to the same category. Let's discuss this more deeply. Let us have your arguments that support your claim. We have to decide at this point as to whether your claim is correct or not. We will have no problems in accepting your claim provided you present your case properly. Let us go into the classical Arabic literature, the most outstanding example of which we believe is the Qur'an, and find out whether what you have casually referred to is actually true. This discussion must not move on even a step further from here unless this issue is resolved. We will wait for examples from classical Arabic literature coming from your side that would show that sudden shifts of pronouns by the author are unheard of and that it has been a blunder on the part of the author of the Qur'an to have done so. We will then, God willing, proceed to tell you through several examples from masterpieces of Arabic literature as to why we believe that such shifts were common place in that literature. We hope that you do not object to our claim that since your criticism is on a particular style of communication adopted by the Arabic Qur'an, it is the standards of classical Arabic literature, especially belonging to the era when the Qur'an was being revealed, and no other criterion, that should be employed to come to any definite conclusion about the relevance of your criticism. We would like to have your clear view on this point in your next response.

You have suggested a third topic for discussion. We very politely request that the discussion on the third topic will make sense only after the first two have been discussed thoroughly. As we have pointed out earlier, we must help readers to make up their minds on the two points you have raised. It's only after the matter on these two issues has been settled that we should move on to others. We assure you that if you have hundred more points that you think can be raised against the claim that the Qur'an has divine origins, we will discuss each one of them in the same spirit and enthusiasm as we are taking up these two. And in case you will be able to academically prove your point convincingly, you will not find us unwilling to acknowledge that you have done so. Let this debate remain a serious academic exercise in which each point which is being taken up for discussion is debated threadbare. Only then would the truth would unfold itself.

Thanks.

Khalid Zaheer

2006/10/09

Dear Mr. Ghamidi and Mr. Zaheer.

Thank you for your response. You made a very important statement that I highlighted in red. You said “what brings us together despite the vast differences in our ideologies is the concern that some people, both religious and non-religious, don’t allow their followers to face realities the way they are. We are confident that we, the participants on both sides of this discussion, are equally concerned that the truth should be allowed to lay bare before our readers and that no method be adopted that would take their minds away from what is being discussed.”

I am very pleased to read that. It is in this regard that I regret the decision made by your government to which you are a religious adviser, to block faithfreedom.org from being accessed in Pakistan. Even though I am certain you had nothing to do with this decision, the timing has raised questions in the minds of some people. One friend from Pakistan wrote:

Mr. Ali Sina

For the whole of past week I was trying to access your website to follow up on the debate between yourself and Mr. Javed Ahmed Gamdi. And I was not able to do so. I thought maybe Faithfreedom Int'l was experiencing some technical difficulties and such other problems. But at the back of mind there was this nagging suspicion that perhaps the Pakistani authorities may have blocked your website.

And it so happens I was right, yesterday through an anonymous online proxy I was able to get through to Faithfreedom.org. Yes I live in Pakistan.

For the past 2 years I was able to access your website without any difficulties and let me tell you that you have opened my eyes about the true nature of islam, and suddenly now that you are debating with a prominent Pakistani scholar your website gets banned/ blocked in Pakistan. Is this a mere coincidence or can we safely assume and count two and two together and reach a logical conclusion.

I hope you realize this can only be interpreted as an effort to keep people in the dark. It absolutely violates what you and I believe that no one has the right to withhold the truth from people. Even though I am certain that you had nothing to do with this reprehensible act of censorship, the timing has raised a few eyebrows. They have done a big disservice to you. To reassure the skeptics that you do not agree with this decision, you may want to publish our debate in your site as well. This gesture will send a clear message to everyone that you truly believe in freedom of information and do not approve censorship of thoughts. It also can be used as proof that you are convinced of the strength of your argument.

Of course it would be commendable if you speak with the authorities in Pakistan and let them know that this banning is reflecting poorly on you and on Islam and that they should lift it at once. You may want to remind them that Islam is truth and truth does not need the

heavy hand of censorship -- all it needs is freedom to triumph. If they believe that Islam is truth, what are they afraid of? If we at FFI lie, we are inviting Muslim scholars to write to us and point to us where we have gone wrong. We provide an open forum for anyone to refute our claim, which Muslims use freely, but to insult us and not to refute us.

Now, as for me introducing a third question, I don't think this is an attempt to distract the readers. As far as the first two points (intercession and the use of pronoun) are concerned I have said what I had to say and I rested my case.

The point is not that you and I should agree. We probably will never agree and frankly, knowing how dangerous is Pakistan and how your lives could be taken away by angry mobs if you agree with me, I do not expect and do not want you to agree with me. I want you good people live long and help your nation to move away from fanaticism and towards moderation and modernity. If you agree with me, that would be your end. So this is not what I am seeking.

I have received words that according to a Hyderabad (India) local news magazine "**Muslim Jagaran**", **Syed Yousaf Bin**, **the chief patron of the Ulema Board, in Hyderabad** has issued a fatwa against my person. According to the sources he has decreed, **"if anybody kills Dr. Ali Sina, he will be rewarded with Rs.1,000,000 (Indian rupees one million)"**. Syed Yousaf Bin was the person behind the fatwa against Indian tennis sensation Sania Mirza.

Haseeb-ul-hasan Siddiqui, a leading cleric of the Muslim organization, the Sunni Ulema Board has also warned me and others behind faithfreedom.org of the consequences that we would have to face if we don't close our website. "**According to Islam, the criticisers of Islam should be stoned to death**," he is reported to have said.

Safdar Nagori who was the secretary-general of the extremist Islamic outfit S.I.M.I (Students Islamic Movement of India) till the organization was proscribed under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002 has been reported to have said, **"Dr. Ali Sina would be killed within a month, irrespective of wherever his hideout is."**

This is happening in the secular India. If anyone issues such blatant death threats and solicit murder in a real democracy, he would have to spend years in jail. India, the largest "democracy" of the world is obviously a banana republic. Muslim goons roam around freely issuing fatwas and offering rewards for the assassination of the critics of Islam and no one dares to call them to account. Does the Indian Police expect me to go there and file suit against these criminals? Isn't issuing death threat a crime in India? Isn't it their duty to go after terrorists? How poorly this reflects on India and Indians who bend backwards to appease Muslims in their country! Now Muslims in India constitute only 12% of the population. But they are procreating faster than the Hindus. What they would demand when they become 20%? Another partition?

Now, this is happening in India, which is allegedly a democracy. What they would do to you in Pakistan, which prides itself to be a fanatical Islamic country and a dictatorship if you

agree with anything I say?

One million rupees are just $21,893 US dollars in today's rate. (I thought I was wroth more. But I am not complaining. Jesus was worth only thirty pieces of silver. This is way more.) However, why kill me? I am offering $50,000 US dollars (more than twice than what these Mullahs are offering) to anyone who can disprove me with the promise to remove the content of this site and publish in each existing page one message saying, "I stand corrected on Islam. Islam is a true religion. Allahu Akbar."

Wouldn't this be more effective? Imagine the impact of that worldwide! Muslims don't have to kill anyone for that. All they have to do is write one page disproving me. By killing me, they only prove what I say about Islam is true. Since this site is now managed by several volunteers, (none knows the others in real life) it will continue its job without me. My assassination will become another news sensation and another nail in the coffin of Islam. Killing people is foolish. It worked in the time of Muhammad and made him succeed by casting terror, but it won't work today.

With every act of violence the world is realizing Islam is barbarity and is more repulsed by it. Have you looked at the polls lately? More and more people are becoming disgusted with Islam. It is not because of what we write in FFI, it is because of what Muslims do.

Those who think the world can be intimidated with terror are fools. They do not understand the resolve of free people to keep their freedom. These people have shed their bloods in two revolutions, one in the heart of Europe and the other in America, to gain their freedom and have fought two World Wars to keep it. They are not going to capitulate to a bunch of ragged-head lousy barbarians. There is a limit to their patience. They won't take this terrorism for too long. Once their patience is worn out, Muslims will pay dearly and wet and dry will burn alike. So please wake them up. Help them see their follies. Stupidity does not pay off. I pray for your success, even though I do not hold my breath and doubt you can do much because this tree is rotten from its roots. I, along with other good people in FFI are working towards the same objective, but with a different strategy. We are axing down this rotten tree. We know it can't bear sweet fruits by pruning. If you succeed before we do and end this madness and terrorism, I promise to stop. But I know you won't and we will.

The purpose of this debate is not that you and I come to an agreement. The purpose is that you and I shed light on two different sides of the coin so our readers can see both points of views and make their minds.

Let me put it this way: I am accusing Muhammad of being a false prophet. You are trying to disprove me by showing that he was indeed a messenger of God and all charges made against him are unfounded and false. In other words, I am playing the role of the prosecutor and you are playing the role of the defense attorney. You and I need not agree. All we have to do is expound our respective cases clearly for the jury and convince them to agree with our view points. The jury is the public. Let you and I do what we are supposed to do and let them come to their verdict.

As I see, the second round of our discussion on the topics of intercession and the use of third person pronoun by Allah in the Quran is a repetition of what each one of us said in the first round. I believe both of us explained this point exhaustively. I think our readers have enough information from both sides to make an intelligent decision. So let us move on.

I remain sincerely yours

Ali Sina